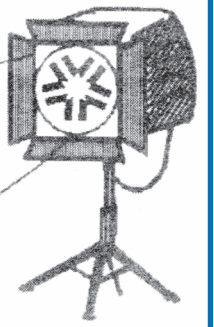


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE 8

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

August 2015



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Brenda Donald
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
Interim Director, D.C. Office on Aging

Continuing the Great Work at D.C. Office on Aging

When Director Thompson left the D.C. Office on Aging to pursue other opportunities, Mayor Muriel Bowser asked that I assume the day-to-day responsibilities as Interim Director of the D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA), in addition to my role as Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

As a D.C. native who grew up in Ward 8, I have a deep commitment to the District and its residents. As the former director of the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency, and having served as the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders for former Mayor Tony Williams, I have spent my career dedicated to improving the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

This is an exciting opportunity for me to continue implementing the Mayor's vision at DCOA. Mayor Bowser is committed to building an age-friendly city where all residents can live, work, play and age-in-place. As Chair of the Age-Friendly D.C. Task Force, I will continue to ensure strong linkages between DCOA operations and community expectations with final recommendations, goals and objectives in the Age-Friendly D.C. Strategic Plan.

An age-friendly D.C. requires a system that educates, encourages, promotes and implements improvements that make every ward and every neighborhood more user-friendly, not only for older residents, but for residents of all ages. I'm excited to support the work of the DCOA staff as we

move forward together to fulfill the vision of an age-friendly D.C.

One of my most important roles as Interim Director of DCOA is to provide continuity for the agency, its Senior Service Network, and the individuals who receive services from DCOA. I work with DCOA every day to ensure that the agency continues to advocate for and provide quality services for all seniors, persons living with disabilities, their families, and caregivers.

I will continue to work to ensure that DCOA has the resources and support it needs to be able to operate its network of providers, consisting of 20 community-based nonprofit organizations that operate over 37 programs providing a wide range of social and health services throughout all eight wards.

Finally, the Mayor has already launched a national search for the next permanent Director of DCOA. DCOA is a thriving agency, and we're excited to choose its next dynamic leader — although Director Thompson left some big shoes to fill!

In the meantime, please know that DCOA will continue to provide the excellent service delivery and customer service you've come to rely on. During my time at DCOA, I've found the staff to be adaptable, dedicated, and hard-working — I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to lead them.

I am enthusiastic about continuing to work together to keep seniors and people with disabilities healthy and vibrant!



Congratulations to the American Classic Woman of the Year, Karen Moore! She is pictured with Letha Blount, founder, and Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Denise Bridges.

DCOA Wins Achievement Award

The D.C. Office on Aging received the 2015 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) Aging Achievement Award in the Transportation & Mobility category for the Seabury Connector Senior Transportation Program.

The Seabury Connector Senior Transportation Service combines multiple transportation programs in response to a Senior Needs Assessment that found transportation and meal services were unsatisfactory and inaccessible.

The program includes:

1. Seabury Connector Transporta-

tion Service — providing transportation to sites citywide;

2. Homebound Meals Delivery Program — offering nutritious meals transport for 460 frail, homebound seniors Monday through Saturday; and

3. Seabury Connector Card Program — offering access to public/private transportation using a prepaid transportation card.

All programs are offered at low or no cost to seniors. For more information, call 202-724-5626.

Saturday Respite

Are you a caregiver who needs a break from your caregiving responsibilities?

Find out more about the DCOA Saturday Respite Program and arrange for more time on the weekends to:

- Do Saturday chores
- See a movie
- Make a hair appointment/get

your hair cut

Call the DCOA Information/Referral and Assistance Unit at 202-724-5626 to see if your loved one qualifies to participate in the Saturday Respite Program. Locations include Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center and Washington Seniors Wellness Center.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Age-Friendly DC Task Force Quarterly Meeting

Thanks to Mayor Muriel Bowser and her predecessor for appointing an Age-Friendly DC Task Force co-chaired by George Washington University president Steven Knapp and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Brenda Donald. In addition to every deputy mayor and several agency directors, there are a near equal group of community leaders that sit on the Task Force. A number of new Task Force members have been sworn in this year.

The most recent meeting, on July 16, was the second Task Force meeting of the calendar year. At the first meeting in May, new Task Force leaders were introduced to the Age-Friendly process and briefed on their responsibilities.

At the July meeting, which was attended by Councilmember Anita Bonds and staff and by the Chief of Staff from Councilmember Brandon Todd's office, leaders from the 10 domain-specific Task Force committees shared updates on the work that their committees had accomplished in June. This included updating and revising strategies in the plan, assigning proper lead agencies, and determining what data will be used to measure progress.

The Age-Friendly DC plan will not be layered in dust, but will change as DC changes. Councilmember Bonds noted that, "This is a city on the move where our residents are living longer," and encouraged Task Force members to alter strategies as they saw fit to re-

flect the changing times of our city.

The next Age-Friendly DC Task Force meeting will be held on Thursday, Sept. 10 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at George Washington University's Marvin Center, 800 21st St. NW, Washington, D.C. At this meeting, the Task Force will vote to accept the domain-specific committees' recommendations on proposed changes to strategies and progress made. All Task Force meetings are open to the public. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to agefriendly@dc.gov.

The 10 domain-specific Task Force committees have scheduled meetings over the course of late July and early August to finalize their recommendations. These committee meetings will be held at the following times:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Thursday, July 30, 1 to 3 p.m., John A. Wilson Building (JAWB), 1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
2. **Transportation:** Thursday, August 13, noon to 2 p.m., District Dept. of Transportation (DDOT), 55 M St. SE
3. **Housing:** Monday, August 17, 1 to 3 p.m., JAWB
4. **Social Participation:** Friday, August 14, 10 a.m. to noon, JAWB
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Thursday, August 13, 10 a.m. to noon, JAWB
6. **Civic Participation and Employment:** Tuesday, August 11, 10 a.m. to noon, DOES

See **AGE-FRIENDLY MEETING** page 34

The District of Columbia 2015 Real Property Tax Sale

The Office of Tax and Revenue has just completed the 2015 tax sale, which started July 20. Homeowners who received a notice of tax sale — or who are not sure whether their home was included in the tax sale — *should seek assistance immediately.*

Each year, the District of Columbia holds a "tax sale" auction. If a home or other property is past-due on taxes, the District will place a lien on the property and sell that lien to the highest bidder at the tax sale auction. The District does not sell the home outright at the tax sale. However, the tax sale could lead to a foreclosure law suit, thousands of dollars in additional fees, and even loss of the home.

Once the home has been included in the tax sale, the homeowner must pay all the past-due taxes and any additional legal fees. This is called "redeeming" the property. After the homeowner redeems the property, the tax sale lien will be removed and the home will no longer be threatened by a foreclosure lawsuit based on the past due taxes.

It is important for homeowners whose property was included in the tax sale to act quickly. The District provides a six-month grace period after the tax sale before a lawsuit may be filed. Property owners

should take action right away to protect themselves against a costly foreclosure lawsuit and ensure that they can remain secure in their homes.

The District offers a number of programs to assist seniors with their real property tax burdens. These include:

Homestead and Senior/Disabled Credits: The "homestead" and "senior/disabled" real property credits can reduce real property tax bills by more than half. But the credits are not automatic — eligible homeowners must submit an application to the Office of Tax and Revenue.

Senior Tax Deferral: The District will allow qualifying seniors age 65 and over to defer payment of their real property taxes for as long as they continue to live in the home. Homeowners who have fallen behind in taxes may even be able to defer taxes retroactively, along with fees relating to a tax sale lawsuit.

Schedule H Income Tax Credit: The "Schedule H" credit is part of the D.C. state income tax return. Schedule H provides a *refundable* credit of up to \$1,000. Even homeowners who are not required to file taxes may be eligible to claim this refundable credit. If you did not

See **PROPERTY TAX**, page 34

White House Conference on Aging

The 2015 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) took place at the White House on July 13. The conference was truly a national conversation. In addition to the older Americans, community leaders and advocates at the White House, there were more than 700 watch parties in every State of the Union. The hashtag #WHCOA also lit up social media with nearly 10,000 Twitter users contributing to the dialogue!

The event was a culmination of the country coming together in a dialogue about aging in America today and what the coming decade holds. Speakers and audience participants discussed a wide range of topics, from caregiving to financial security to technology and more. The 2015 White House Conference on Aging was an opportunity to highlight the importance of supporting the aging population in the United

States. The Administration announced a number of key deliverables to help empower Americans as they age.

The true highlight of the day came early on when President Obama delivered remarks from the East Room of the White House. He noted that one of the best measures of a country is how it treats its older citizens, and some of this country's greatest triumphs are Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security programs — created by Congress in 1965 and 1935, respectively.

"Together we declared that every citizen of this country deserves a basic measure of security and dignity," said President Obama. "That choice saved millions upon millions of our people from poverty, allowed them to live longer and better lives."

For more information on the WHCOA, visit www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov.

Age-Friendly DC Wants to Know Your Opinion!

In reviewing existing data for the World Health Organization Indicator Project, Age-Friendly DC staff discovered that there were a number of core indicators of age-friendliness that we did not have a good assessment of in D.C.

As a result, Age-Friendly DC, working in partnership with the *Beacon Newspapers*, was the first jurisdiction worldwide to develop and distribute a Livability Survey, based on the WHO core indicator questions.

At the 2015 DC Office on Aging Symposium, the May issue of the *Beacon*, which included the livability

survey in English, was distributed. Soon the livability survey will be distributed in Spanish, Amharic, French, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

An English online version of the survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/AFDCLivability.

For paper copies in any of the languages mentioned above, please contact Age-Friendly DC at 202-727-2736, so your voice, evaluating DC's Age-Friendliness, will be heard. You'll be asked the same questions again in 2017, to determine if the Age-Friendly DC Strategic Plan has transformed DC into an easier city to grow up and older in.

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant 2015

“Women in the Mirror” ★ ★ ★

Congratulations to Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Denise Bridges, a Ward 5 resident and former educator in the D.C. Public Schools System. She was one of seven District women age 60 and older who competed in the Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant 2015 at the Theatre of the Arts at the University of the District of Columbia. This year's theme of the Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant was “Women in the Mirror,” and contestants were judged on their interview, philosophy of life, talent and evening gown presentations.

The contestants were introduced to the audience during an opening number where they danced to Michael Jackson's “Man in the Mirror” with members of the senior dance group, the MC Steppers. The opening also included dance performances by the MC Steppers featuring Ms. Senior D.C. Toni Jackson, and Emma Ward, Ms. Senior D.C. 2011, dancing to a medley of hits including “Can't Let Her Get Away,” “I Want you Back,” “ABC,” “Got to Be There,” “Billy Jean,” “Smooth Criminal” and “Jam.”

Wearing a red costume complete with fringe and

headband from the Roaring '20s flapper era, Bridges danced and performed pantomime to “Satin Doll” and “I Feel Good” during the talent segment of the pageant. Her performance and music selection was her interpretation of how it felt to be a girl.

First Runner-up Frances Johnson presented a dramatic dialogue, “Senior-hood — just a number that brings about growth, maturity and wisdom with a flare of ageless attitude.” Awarded Best Evening Gown, Johnson's fuchsia crystal and silk gown with strapless bodice was adorned by a stole that began at the waist and draped over the left shoulder. The graceful skirt flowed into a mermaid hem. A resident of Ward 3, Johnson was escorted by her son Jamaal. She was also awarded Best Interview and voted Ms. Congeniality by her fellow contestants.

Sylvia Inez Gaither was Second Runner-up and received the Best Talent Award by the judges. She sang the hymn, “Great is Thy Faithfulness,” a cappella, demonstrating the full power and range of her voice to the audience and judges.

Other contestants participating in the event included Virginia Davis, who danced a belly dance inspired by Michael Jackson; Olympia Lopez, who performed a lively and rhythmic traditional Latin Dance; Janet Purnell, who sang and performed “Proud Mary;” and Janice Rice, who presented her poem about friendship and danced to Anthony Hamilton's “Amazing.”

Ms. Senior America Patsy Godley of Virginia also performed during the event, singing “If You Have Leaving on Your Mind” by Patsy Cline. The award-winning country singer also provided greetings at the event and participated in the crowning of Ms. Senior D.C.

Ms. Senior D.C. will compete in the Ms. Senior America Pageant to be held in Atlantic City, NJ from Oct. 18 to 22, where Godley will crown the new queen.

The Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant 2015 was presented by the D.C. Seniors Cameo Club, the D.C. Office on Aging, and its Senior Service Network. For more information on how you can support Ms. Senior D.C. as she competes for the title, call Monica Carroll at 202-635-1900.



The winner of Best Evening Gown was Frances Johnson.

Best Talent was awarded to Sylvia Inez Gaither for her performance of “Great is Thy Faithfulness.”



Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Denise Bridges waves to the audience after she is crowned.



The seven contestants are pictured left to right: Janice Rice; Virginia Davis; Sylvia Gaither, Second Runner-up and Best Talent; Ms. Senior D.C. Wendy Denise Bridges; Toni Jackson, Ms. Senior D.C. 2014; Frances Johnson, First Runner-up, Best Evening Gown and Best Interview; Olympia Lopez; and Janet Purnell. Each contestant is pictured with her escort.



Ms. Senior America Patsy Godley; Ms. Virginia Senior America Janis Thomas; Ms. Senior D.C. Toni Jackson; Nancy A. Berry, Ms. Senior D.C. 2013; Sheila Poole, Ms. Senior D.C. 2010; and Elaine S. Terry, Ms. Senior D.C. 1998 pose before the event.

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Community Calendar

August Events

4th and 18th • noon

The D.C. Caregivers Online Chat at Noon is a great resource for caregivers. Log on for advice, resources and tips to assist you with your caregiving responsibilities. If you are not available at noon, check back at your convenience and hit replay to see the entire chat. Join the discussion at www.dcoa.dc.gov/page/caregiver-chat. For more information, contact Linda Irizarry at 202-535-1442 or linda.irizarry@dc.gov.

8th • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ward 8 food pantries will hold a Collaborative Community Day and Health Fair at Allen AME Church, 2498 Alabama Ave. SE. For more information, contact Alice A. Thompson at 202-535-1321.

14th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center will hold its annual Family & Friends Day/Open House. The center is located at 324 Kennedy St. NW. To learn more, contact Teresa Moore at 202-291-3611.

15th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A Community Health Fair will be held at Macedonia Baptist Church, 2625 Stanton Rd. SE. For more information, contact Alice A. Thompson at 202-535-1321.

20th • 10 a.m. to noon

The D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Ambassador Program is a free, interactive, member-based program designed to reach out to older adults and their caregivers to help them learn about the services and resources available through DCOA. If you are interested in expanding your network and educating older adults about the services and resources available to them, join us for our next Ambassador Training Workshop to learn about all of the programs and services that DCOA offers to the community and how you can become an Ambassador. All workshops include an overview of Office on Aging programs and services, information on how to access resources, and guidance on your role as an advocate. Call 202-724-5622 to register today.

20th • 10:30 a.m. to noon

The Center for the Blind & Visually Im-

paired will host a Family & Friends Day. The center is located at 2900 Newton St. NE. For more information, call Gloria Duckett at 202-529-8701, ext. 219.

20th • 5 to 7 p.m.

The Metropolitan Police Dept. presents a Beat the Streets neighborhood event to help dispel violence, improve community relations, and encourage citizens to live peacefully. Music, food and games will be available. Government, community, health and nonprofit agencies will also provide services. The event will take place at the picnic area at 1230 Sumner Rd. SE. For more information, contact Alice A. Thompson at 202-535-1321.

29th • 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A community day will be held at Sargent Memorial Presbyterian Church, 5109 Nannie Helen Burroughs Ave. NE. For more information, contact Alice A. Thompson at 202-535-1321.

29th • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The New Mt. Olive Church will hold a health and community day. The church is lo-

cated at 710 58th St. NE. For more information, contact Jean Donaldson at 202-441-8096.

Sept. Events

16th • noon to 1:30 p.m.

The Chevy Chase (DC) and Georgetown Chapters of NARFE (National Association of Retired Federal Employees) will hold a free seminar, "Take Charge/Age Well," at the Tenley-Friendship Library (Metro Red Line), 4450 Wisconsin Ave. NW, second floor. The speaker will be Lylie Fisher, director of community engagement at IONA Senior Services. Fisher will address "mindful living" questions, such as: How do I want to live my life? Who do I want to be? Should I age in the community? What are the next best steps for me? For more information, call 202-744-2874.

18th • 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 2015 Lifespan Respite Caregiver Conference will address the concerns and training needs for intergenerational families, older adults and people with disabilities. For more information, call Linda Irizarry at 202-535-1442, or e-mail Linda.Irizarry@dc.gov.

Age-friendly meeting

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7. Communications and Information: Monday, August 10, 1 to 3 p.m., JAWB

8. Community Support and Health Services: Tuesday, August 18, 3 to 5 p.m., JAWB

9. Emergency Preparedness and Resilience: Monday, August 10, 10 a.m. to noon, JAWB

10. Elder Abuse, Neglect and Fraud: Wednesday, August 12, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., JAWB

If you would like to attend any of these meetings, please RSVP to age-friendly@dc.gov and indicate the specific committee meeting/s you are interested in.

Age-Friendly DC staff is planning to do extensive community outreach after the release of its progress report in October.

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

The Office on Aging is in partnership with the District of Columbia Recycling Program.

Property tax

From page 32

claim the credit in recent years, you may still be able to claim the credit for up to 3 years past.

D.C. Housing Finance Agency Tax Lien Extinguishment Program: Finally, there is even a grant program offered by the D.C. Housing Finance Authority that will pay all the past-due taxes of qualifying homeowners.

Office of the Real Property Tax Ombudsman: Can assist with residential real property tax issues if administrative remedies through the Office of Tax and Revenue have

been unsuccessful. The Ombudsman's Office can also provide general information on real property taxes and the real property tax sales process. Call 202-727-1529.

Legal Counsel for the Elderly can provide detailed information about these programs, and may be able to assist homeowners with their applications. LCE can also represent senior homeowners in court to help save their home from tax sale foreclosure.

If your home was in the tax sale, or if you are behind in your real property taxes, contact Legal Counsel for the Elderly's Hotline today at 202-434-2120.

Elder Abuse Prevention Committee Trains Professionals on Abuse

On July 17, the D.C. Elder Abuse Prevention Committee conducted a training program on financial fraud prevention for social workers and other professionals who provide services to older adults. This comprehensive "train the trainer" program, entitled "Developing Skills to Help Seniors Avoid Financial Exploitation," focused on the "Money Smart for Older Adults" training curriculum developed by the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to prevent financial exploitation of older adults.

Topics discussed included fiduciary abuse; abuse by caregivers and in-home helpers; investment fraud; and telephone, Internet, and other scams that older adults need to be aware of in order to avoid financial exploitation.

Members of the D.C. Elder Abuse Prevention Committee are available to present "Money Smart for Older Adults" to community groups upon request. If you are interested in learning more about the program, please contact Deborah Royster, chair, Elder Abuse Prevention Committee, at deborah.royster@dc.gov or by telephone at 202-727-6603.